

# Proposed Expansion of Smoking Cessation Benefit for HPHC Enrollees in Active Plans

PEC Meeting  
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health  
PURCHASING

# Background

- Smoking is bad for your health and costly for the City
  - Smoking creates a high risk for getting lung, pancreatic, and skin cancers; and for developing cardiovascular disease
  - Second hand smoke causes increased occurrences of asthma and ear infections in children of smokers
  - The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that on average smokers generate \$1,623 additional medical expenditures annually compared to non-smokers.
- Stopping smoking is very difficult for most smokers
  - More than half have tried to stop over the past year
  - On average it takes smokers 10+ attempts to stop smoking

# Promoting Smoking Cessation

- The Boston Public Health Commission recommends a smoking cessation program that offers a variety of supports for smoking cessation, including:
  - Nicotine replacement therapy
  - Prescription drugs
  - Several types of counseling, such as phone counseling, on-line counseling and in person programs
- Currently HPHC does not cover nicotine replacement therapy products. Both NHP and BCBSMA do.
  - HPHC, NHP and BCBS cover prescription drugs and offer counseling both over the phone and online

# Recommended Expansion of HPHC Smoking Cessation Benefit to Create Plan Equity

- **Effective July 1, 2012**
  - Offer nicotine replacement therapy products (patches, gum and lozenges) as a covered pharmacy benefit
  - Obtain patch, gum and lozenges at generic co-pay rates with a physician's prescription
  - Allow two full rounds of patches during a calendar year
  - No quantity limits on gum and lozenges
- **Continue to have available additional smoking cessation options**
  - Coverage of prescription brands, such as Zyban and Chantix, and Nicotine Nasal Spray and Oral Nicotine Inhaler on assigned tiers
  - QuitWorks – State-sponsored phone counseling program
  - Nutritional counseling with physician prescription

# Anticipated Costs and Benefits

- City has an estimated 4,000 smokers covered by HPHC
- If 31% used the new benefit, new pharmacy costs are estimated at \$165,000 annually.
- Studies indicate that long-term for every \$1 invested in smoking cessation programs, \$7 is saved.\*
- MassHealth, after expanding smoking cessation benefits, saw a 38 percent drop in hospitalizations due to heart attacks, a 17 percent drop in the number of emergency room visits for asthma and another 17 percent drop in pregnancy complications, including ectopic pregnancies, hemorrhages and pre-term labor.

# Proposed Launch

- Notify HPHC enrollees of new benefit
  - Prior to July 1, send letter from City explaining full range of benefits, including new benefit
  - Future plan information will include new benefit information
- Offer 5- to 6-session, on-site smoking cessation program
  - 3 locations around the City for up to 15 people each location
  - If successful, offer another round of on-site programs
  - Recommend starting on-site programs in September

# Discussion

- **PEC Feedback:**
  - Recommended benefit expansion
  - Communications regarding expanded benefits
  - Timing of on-site programs
  - Possible locations of on-site programs